

The Noise

The Creation of a Symphonic Novel

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Master of Fine Arts
Music Performance

Luleå University of Technology
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Luleå University of Technology Department of Arts, Communication and
Education**

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Abstract

This thesis describes how the artistic work “The Noise” came to fruition, and the emergence of the term “symphonic-fiction novel”

“The Noise” is a symphonic-fiction novel, which is at heart a novel written as an E-book. It has musical tracks imbedded in the book itself that have differing connections to the words and the story of the book. In “The Noise” I’ve written music for a vast array of ensembles, ranging from solo piano to the full orchestra

In this thesis I explore what happens when I combine my abilities within literature with my skills in musical composition. I will also discuss similar projects as this one, both on their own and in relation to “The Noise”. I will briefly discuss the finding that “The Noise” is original since it is not based on synchronization as the other projects before it.

This is a thesis in composition and is therefore firmly based on the musical part of the symphonic-fiction novel, yet I will also talk about the written part of the book.

Overall, I feel that the project has successfully achieved the goals specified in the objective.

Keywords: *Symphonic-fiction novel, Composition, Combining music and text and book music*

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1. Introductions

1.1. Short introduction to the author

My musical interests began at the age of 14 when I discovered the genre of symphonic metal music (with bands such as Nightwish, Cradle of Filth and Dimmu borgir). These genres were soon accompanied by various kinds of film music as well as contemporary classical music. To this day, I hold Vaughan Williams, Howard Shore and Stravinsky to be my most influential role models.

My literary journey began in earnest when I was 17, a tad later than my musical journey. I started off by reading some fantasy classics like Harry Potter by J.K. Rowling, Eragon by Christopher Paulini, Lord of the rings by J.R.R. Tolkien and Mistbourne by Brandon Sanderson. I quickly grew fond of this genre, a fondness that has remained until this day. Later I added some more known classics to my repertoire, like 1984 by George Orwell and The picture Of Dorian Grey by Oscar Wilde. To this day, I hold George Orwell, Oscar Wilde and Brandon Sanderson as my strongest idols in the literary genre.

Somewhere along the way, I had to decide which passion to pursue. In the end I chose music, and began my education at the university of Luleå, and thus my literary journey was put on hold for a couple of years. It's therefore no wonder that I pounced on an opportunity to combine these two disciplines when the time came for me to do my master's thesis.

1.2. Historical introduction to the project.

It strikes me as curious that this genre isn't bigger. Humans have combined text and music in the form of song for ages. Considering that we've had orations and song with rhythmic text almost as long as we've had our language. We even had the first opera over half a millennium ago! Combining text with music has been so natural for us, yet it has taken us this long to begin our first steps to combine them in the manner of the symphonic-fiction novel. Much of this is of course due to the revolutions within the field of recording and sound engineering that has made this kind of art form possible. So, saying that we've had since the dawn of time to develop this combination is to angle the question a bit unfairly. Realistically we've had a little more than a hundred years on us to develop this (since the invention of the first recording device). Put in that redeeming light, I believe the novelty to be a fair excuse for our ignorance.

2. The background to the project

The idea to combine the disciplines of the written word and musical composition and let them inspire each other, arose during the early stages of a previous book project of mine with the working title: “The seed of life”. It was late at night, and I found myself at a drought for ideas. Exhausted by the figurative banging of the head against the abstract door of inspiration, I decided to take a break by playing some piano, intending the music to clear my mind. Instead, my mind was filled with the characters I had just been writing about, and I pictured the continuation of the story as I improvised. The music became large and epic, leading my imagination to picture my characters on a huge meadow outside the capital city of the fantasy world I had just been writing in. And as easy as that, I had the continuation of the story. My characters were going beyond the city walls, to explore the surrounding landscape!

This became just one of many examples where music helped me to continue the story, but also the reverse. Sometimes I would write down one character’s main traits, and the theme for that character would arise simultaneously with its literary birth. I found this experience interesting, something that needed to be explored.

The experience above has been in the back of my mind for a couple of years, but it wasn’t until I had to choose my research subject that the project saw the light of day. Previously, my authorship has remained a hobby; meaning that I’ve been content to write the beginnings of books and stories without finishing them due to the project’s lack of a deadline (as was also the fate of “The Seed Of Life,” the book I mentioned earlier.

“The Seed of Life,” was my initial idea that I wanted to turn into the first symphonic-fiction novella. However, this changed drastically during the summer when I added some classics to my usually fantasy dominated reading routine. Reading some of these classics (like “1984” by George Orwell and “The Picture Of Dorian Gray” by Oscar Wilde) left me with the idea that my original story would be too empty of content, as I had a lot of plot planned which would not give sufficient room for the philosophical part of the book to flourish. Therefore, I came up with “The Noise” instead, where the plot is something as small as the conversation between two people. This gave me the necessary room to express my ideas.

3. Objective and research questions

In this thesis I aim to explore what happens when the creative process involves more than one *major* discipline within the same person. I also aim to investigate, to the best of my abilities and ethics, how to combine these two elements in what I will judge to be a natural manner.

On a personal level I aim to extend my knowledge of the written word, along with my knowledge of composing music linked with another written story.

The main goal of the thesis though, is to be able to answer these four research questions based on the artistic part of the thesis.

Research questions:

- What happens when I combine the art form of literature with musical composition?
- How is the creative process affected when I combine the two major art disciplines of composition and the written word within the same artistic work?
- How does the individual results within these two major art disciplines compare with some of my previous projects, where only one major discipline was used?
- Does it show in the final artwork that two major disciplines were used by the same person?

4. Method and material

I have combined my skills within the written word with my abilities as a composer to engage them in a unified creative process where I wrote a novel at the same time as I composed an hour of music. The manners in which I did this will be explained further under the “process” part of this thesis.

I have taken the YouTube course “how to write about dragons,” hosted by Brandon Sanderson (2016), in order to better understand the mechanics involved in writing a novel.

I have explored various ways of combining a novel with music.

Equipment and software used in the project:

- Sibelius 6 for writing score for the participating musicians
- Word 2011 for writing the book itself.
- Cubase 5 for editing the recorded material
- The keyboard at my studio apartment to come up with ideas
- A grand piano at the Department of Arts and Education for some of the recordings.

5. The book

It is important to clarify that this thesis is written within the realm of music rather than literature, and there shall its focus lie. That said, it is also impossible to disregard the significance of the book entirely. That is why I've chosen to include this small chapter about the book.

Attached to this thesis is an excerpt from the book. These chapters contain all the music that I will be analyzing in this thesis, as an analysis of the entire book would be too large a task. Below is an image from the book's preface, which explains the project to the consumer. The preface also tries to direct the consumer in how to best experience this work of art. If the quality of the image below is dissatisfactory, I would recommend that you find the preface on page one on the attached pdf.

Preface

This book is part of a revolutionary concept that combines the art of music with the written word.

When we read it is an undeniable fact that we create our own world inside our heads. By adding tailored music to that experience I hope to transcend the experience from 'reading a book to reading a movie'. Unlike a real movie though, characters won't be these set-in-stone figures we see on the screen, rather they will contain the depth and awesomeness of our own imagination.

Dispersed throughout its many chapters, there will be small musical pieces, which alternately describe the scene or mood of the characters. Sometimes, it even supplements the story where words fall short.

It's important to note that the term 'reading a movie' is not to be interpreted to any synchronization regarding the music and the events in the book. Each musical piece has its own individuality, form and complexity and is therefore meant to capture your full attention on its own. It's therefore recommended that the reader listens to the music first (wherever it might appear), and reads later with the music in the fresh in memory.

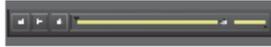
If you have the PDF version, the music will appear as play buttons in the PDF file itself.

If you have a tangible copy, the music can be found free of charge online, arranged in the order they are supposed to be played. Icons will inform you when to change track.

From the book's preface.

A picture can often speak more than a thousand words as the saying goes, which is why I have chosen to display an image from the layout of the finished work below.

Chapter 6



Thousand years ago from the core of the sun itself, a stray of light began its journey towards freedom. It had been a long thousand years, filled with turmoil and violence as the ray had been smashed to pieces and reformed, only to be broken apart once more. But lately the pressure had been lessening, as had the insane warmth that had accompanied it throughout its life, the blackness of space suddenly visible in the distance.

There!

It finally broke free, radiating at a terrible speed through the cold vacuum of nothing that surrounded its warm and safe mother.

Planets passed by as if they were nothing but small remnants of space debris, left to their own gravitational prostitution. One of them, a large and blue one, materialized before the tiny beam, their collision an inevitable fact.

A thin layer of gas surrounded the blue orb. The luminous ray penetrated this with ease, used to far more extreme rebuttals than this simplistic form of gas could muster. Cutting through atom after atom it flew as fast as ever, indistinct landscapes became clearer and clearer, the landscapes turned into houses, the houses into a colorful mansion and the mansion into a tanning man and woman, before it finally collided with a green orb, the reflective orb bouncing it back into nothingness.

"Sun's coming up," Morina declared, when the yellow ball peeked out from behind the clouds to sting at her eyes for the first time in ages. Casually, she slipped her sunglasses down from her forehead to her nose, giving her eyes some reprieve from the sudden onslaught of light.

The two horizons were comfortably seated on Eli's patio, both with a pair of sweating drinks in their hands, their pale skin hungrily absorbing the warm rays of the burning sun.

Before them, the sea of green stretched for a couple of acres, until it stopped at a brick wall, separating the people with things to do, from the ones with nothing better for them than to relax outside on a Wednesday afternoon.

"Yeah," Eli agreed lazily from his designer sun-bed to her left, mirroring her actions with his own pair of sunglasses.

Morina was close to dozing off when she felt the warmth of staring eyes to her left.

The image above is taken from the finished book. However, due to the limitations of the PDF format, the excerpts might show a link instead of the play interface shown here.

5.1 Synopsis of “The Noise”

Spoiler warning!

In the first chapter we are introduced to Morina, the protagonist in this story. She’s a factory worker at a brewery, where she’s happily living out her thirties (her exact age is 34). In the very first scene, Morina is awoken from sleep by her phone. It’s Roy, one of her coworkers at the brewery. Roy informs Morina that she is late to work, sending her into a burst of motion out the door and into her grey and boring Fiat Uno. Racing down the Athalian rush traffic (Athalia being the city of the protagonist), Morina is suddenly hit by a trailer truck, sending her into a coma that lasts for many days. In the depths of the coma she is teleported to a world with two moons, one green and one yellow, the yellow one shining like a weak sun. This world will later be referred to in the book as “the world of twin moons”. In this world of twin moons, Morina falls into a lake where she is dragged down to the bottom. At the bottom, she finds a black hole that fills her with knowledge, letting her experience the world through a third and unknown party. When Morina wakes up from her coma, the happy little girl she was before has been replaced by something else.

In the next chapters we follow Morina’s recovery. During this time we are also introduced to her fondness for Blackleaf, a black plant that has similar medicinal qualities as our marijuana when smoked. We are also introduced to Mr. Maddox, the man driving the trailer that hit Morina, he is badly injured due to some twisted sense of bad luck. During her time at the hospital, Mr Maddox dies, a fact that haunts Morina with guilt throughout the book.

When Morina is released she heads home to her apartment in one of the poorer districts of the city (but not the poorest, a fact she likes to point out). In her home, Morina is suddenly stricken with how empty her life is. “Now what? Smoke Blackleaf until the end of my days?” She asks in a silent plea to no one in particular from a soul searching for any sort of meaning in a world it has troubles recognizing. The philosophy of “the noise” is made clearer after she leaves the hospital, but there are some thoughts around the subject at the hospital as well. In essence, the noise is this: All impressions have the ability to overwhelm a mind, especially when the impressions number more than one. The impressions become noise rather than the helpful tools they have the opportunity to be, when the malleable mind has no way of harnessing them. (This is of course just a crude retelling of the philosophy)

Eventually Morina meets Eli, a beautiful young and spoiled musician and artist. They meet at one of Eli's recitals where he plays the piano. In his music, Morina sees a perfect creature, connected to the harmony of no thoughts, the harmony of what she sees as a noiseless state of being. After the concert they find a friendly chemistry in opposites that ends in an invitation to one of Eli's parties. Eli as it turns out, owns a large property and is flush with money.

In the next chapters their friendship deepens, though Morina is always afraid of what her "noise filled thoughts" might do to Eli's malleable mind. This fear turns out to be a genuine one, as Eli adopts the noise as his own. In desperation, Morina watches as Eli's mind drift further and further away from that perfection of a boy she had first met, yet all of her efforts to bring him out of the noise is met with the fiercest of resistance. More often than not, her advice seems to be bringing him further away from her rather than closer.

In one of the last chapters, the noise reaches a culmination in Morina when she hears Eli's newest noise filled composition. It's an organ piece, and the noise is so undisguised that it cannot be ignored. Overcome with guilt she flees Eli, and runs through a wintery Athalia, the noise growing stronger with each step. Eventually, she arrives at home, but when she opens her door, she is teleported back to the world of twin moons, where she again experiences the world through a third medium. During this phase, she is filled with knowledge, with truths unbeknown to mankind. When she returns to the real world, this knowledge is still within her, so she writes it in blood on her apartment walls. On those walls, she also leaves a riddle for Eli, a last advice to her friend. Morina then dies of the blood loss.

The chapter after Morina's death describes Eli's slow descent into the noise (Eli becomes the protagonist). With no one to stop him, he is free to isolate himself and devote his time to indulge in any abstraction he sees as worthy of his attention. We are taken through his attempts to solve the riddle, attempts that always seem to end in failure.

Eventually Eli manages to solve the riddle through some memory he had stored from his time together with Morina. The message reads: "Eli, behold your future."

6. The process

In order to finish a work of this magnitude within the given timeframe, I knew that I would have to “step up my game” as they say - seeing that this work needed approximately an hour of music, and that I usually create about thirty minutes of new music every year (disregarding the fact that I would have to finish the book as well). To solve this problem I based much of the music on themes. The music is also based around a general emotion of “barren sadness,” as this was my prevalent feeling whenever my mind would enter the world of the book. This emotion, along with the themes became my guidelines during the creative process.

The book and the music were created simultaneously, meaning that I alternated between the disciplines frequently, often within the same day. This I will delve into later.

To speed up the compositional process I had to change my previous creative procedures as they would prove too inefficient. The solution came in what I like to call the “first idea process”. The idea of “the first idea process,” is to take the best idea I came up with within a given timeframe, and make it good through other parameters, like instrumentation, orchestration or production. This allowed me the productivity I needed to reach the necessary amount of music.

Most of the musical compositions in this book are created according to this principle. One of them is the twin moons theme. A theme, which I wrote originally for organ and flute, but the theme returns throughout the book as it signifies Morina’s mystical realm of knowledge.

6.1 The music

6.1.1 The overture.

The theme used in the overture is Morina’s theme. It was also the first theme I composed early in September during the first steps of this project. At this point I hadn’t formulated the “barren sadness timbre” idea that later became a prevalent trait in the music as well as the process. In the overture, I found inspiration in modern film music instead, the only reference I had that correlated with the

written word and music, which is also the reason why this piece and theme deviates the most from the rest of the music in this project.

When I later found the “barren sadness timbre,” I wondered whether I should include this theme or not since it’s so different from the rest. After much contemplation I decided to include it, but only as a description of Morina when she is “without the noise”. In practicality, this only occurs on two occasions, before her accident (in the overture) and after her death. The Overture is written for the full orchestra, informing the listener of what to expect in terms of maximum sized ensemble.

The harmonies used in the overture is very much inspired by a popular harmonization technique in contemporary choir music. It utilizes “pan diatonic clusters,” to make a wide and full timbre, while the timbre still retains its tonality. A pan diatonic cluster is made by filling in the “holes” in a chord. In the two examples below, we see how a normal a minor chord becomes a pan diatonic cluster by “filling in the blanks”.

Example 1. A normal a minor chord:



Example 2. By adding the pitches b and d, we use the scale to fill in the missing tones, and create a pan diatonic a-minor cluster:



This exact timbre can also be found at the horn section at the first bar of the overture. An excerpt can be found on the next page. A full score can be found on this link.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0Byr5aqOZoIYdNzBLdWlkYUt6QjQ>

Example 3. The first page of the overture.

Molto espressivo the noise of knowledge

$\text{♩} = 56$ **accél.** $\text{♩} = 80$

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Flute 1
Flute 2
Oboe 1
Oboe 2
Clarinet 1 in B
Clarinet 2 in B
Bassoon 1
Bassoon 2 / Contrabassoon

Horn 1 in F
Horn 2 in F
Horn 3 in E
Horn 4 in F

Flagehorn 1
Flagehorn 2

Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Bass Trombone

Tuba

Timpani

Tim-tam

Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Violoncello
Contrabasso

Te Perc. 1, 2
Percussion
Grand timbale
Grosset timbale
Cimbal
Cymbale

6.1.2. Eli's piece.

In chapter six Morina meets Eli for the first time. They meet at one of his piano recitals, where he performs one of his solo piano compositions. In this composition, Morina believes that she sees Eli for the ascended, noiseless creature that she believes him to be.

The quote below is taken from page 27 in the attached excerpt. The scene depicts Morina as she experiences Eli's music for the first time.

“On the stage, the man from the poster was playing a grand piano, his brows furrowed in concentration while a joyous smile tugged at his lips.

As the piece progressed, Morina became increasingly entranced by the scene before her, its beauty temporarily freeing her from the ache in her legs, the black ball becoming no more than a faint myth of the past. Mesmerized, her eyes followed the young man's every move as his long fingers gently caressed the white and black keys before him, eyes alight with the life of a noiseless ascended, a person as close to perfect as one can be without being one with matter and in an equilibrium with the noise.

When the last chord was struck, Morina's trance was complete. Her mouth hung slack and open as she enjoyed the silence that followed, the interim of silence letting her emotions fill the emptiness in the room.

A ripple of applause broke out from the sparse audience, the sudden spike in volume smacking Morina out of her reverie and back to the real world. She fumbled with her hands, for the first time eager to take part in the delusion of merriment that followed every performance.

The beautiful man rose from behind the piano and bowed, eliciting increased applause from the islands of taken seats.

‘Thank you for your time!’ he proclaimed when the applause had died down. ‘Please feel free to buy my CD on the way out,’ he advertised shamelessly as the audience began to stir, his hand pointing to a table at the back of the concert hall filled with stacks upon stacks of CD's, all carrying the same cover.

Morina didn't rise with the others. She needed a moment to digest it all. Closing her eyes, she reenacted the last piece in her head, seeing again the handsome man's elegant fingers caress the keys, his hair falling to his shoulders while his blonde strands danced along with the tempo of the music. She wasn't the best of judge of music, but she did feel a present emptiness in the played notes. It was as if they were filled with the innocence and naivety of a child, they neither explored nor gratified and was to Morina's knowledge and perception, written without any speck of originality. Yet funnily enough all of these things only heightened Morina's appreciation for it as the music was intimately linked with its creator, exposing the man for what he was: free of the abstract prison, unrestrained from the empirical chain which so often paralyzes the mind with age. There was a harmony to the piece which was also reflected in the

man's eyes. It was the harmony of nature itself, almost as if his mind was close to one with matter where thought and action become one and the same."

The music to this chapter is supposed to be the very piece that Morina hears in that concert hall.

Recreating this turned out to be much harder than I thought, as the piece needed to be bad, yet not distasteful. Intentionally composing a banality is something I've personally never done in my life, it became one of the greater challenges in this compositional process.

To tackle this challenge I used my first idea process, giving myself one day to create as many pieces as possible through improvisation, and among them choose the best candidate. This resulted in three different ideas for Eli's first piece.

In the links below are the scores to the three versions of Eli's piece that I made that day. They are all created through improvisation around the form A-B-A. I chose the A-B-A form since this form is standardized and easy to understand.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0Byr5aqOZoiYdSm80eVFWX2ZubkU>

Eli's first piece 1

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0Byr5aqOZoiYddFpIT2Z5bmZ6enM>

Eli's first piece 2

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0Byr5aqOZoiYdRHVickNMSmJYOTg>

Eli's first piece 3

When I revised the pieces at the end of the day, I found that piece two and especially three to be too challenging as the harmonies used in those pieces were relatively distanced from the status quo of tonality listeners are used to today. Piece one was more structurally sound in its unoriginality, both of melody and harmony, making piece one the winner.

However, when I showed piece one to my composition teacher Fredrik Högberg, he noted that the piece sounded too complex for a character like Eli. He argued

that the piece needed to be even simpler in order to reflect Eli's simple character. He also indicated that the piece shouldn't be *bad*, rather he urged me to focus on making it *simple and tasteful* instead.

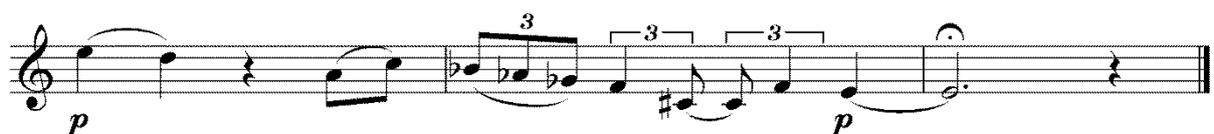
After the lesson with Fredrik, I went home with his comments fresh in memory and composed a fourth version that later became Eli's piece. This piece had a simple but effective melody that was easy to remember; it was not technically challenging and used only four different chords, which gave it a very stable harmonic foundation to the untrained listener. In short, it was the perfect piece for the harmonious and noiseless Eli. The piano score is in the link below.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0Byr5aqOZoYdUmh6cVFZSEhRTnM>

Eli's first piece finished

6. 1.3. Eli's theme.

When I sat down to compose Eli's theme, I wanted to describe the person he was going to become, rather than the noiseless creature he started out as. I wanted a melodic material that was something more alien than what normal tonality had to offer, yet I also wanted it to hint at tonality as to not alienate the common listener completely. Below is an excerpt of Eli's theme in its original form.



In chapter six, Eli and Morina are having a drink on Eli's patio one late autumn afternoon. The scene is described as a happy one, centered on the warm and light sun. Yet the melancholy and slightly ominous music tells another story entirely. The music tells what the words cannot, that the act of immoral influence is about to occur, that Morina is about to transfer some of her noise to Eli. An action she will regret for the remainder of the story. To illustrate this in the music, I had the woodwinds play an extended version of Eli's theme to a somber and slow harmony and tempo. The theme is also centered on the whole tone scale. The whole tone scale has no half steps, creating an atmosphere of not belonging

anywhere. This is meant to reflect Eli's malleable mind that he's at the precipice of bliss and disaster. The example below is taken from bar 42 of Eli's theme.

First the theme is played extended in the solo Cor Anglais:

Cor Anglais *solo espress.*
p
 3
 3
 3

C. A.
 4
 3
 3

Then as an answer to the solo Cor Anglais, the Oboe and Flute come in, extending the theme further.

Flute
 3
 3

Oboe
 3

Fl.
 4
 3

Ob.
 3

6. 1.4. The world of twin moons.

In the book, I wanted Morina to see “the world of twin moons” as a manifestation of the noise. This is never said explicitly in the text, but is expressed through the music, since “the world of twin moons” has its own theme, and this theme is often to be found when she thinks about the noise. One example of this is at the end of chapter six, where Morina feels guilt about her recent immoral influence on Eli, and the music then expresses this noise through the theme of twin moons.

I imagined “the world of twin moons” to have an atmosphere of ominous suppressed noise (important to note that noise in this context means the philosophical noise described in the book, rather than our common use of the word). To create this atmosphere I chose to use an octatonic scale over simple

minor harmonies as I felt that that combination gave the intended dark mood I was looking for. The harmonies are often very simplistic and minimalistic, alternating between two or three chords and often with the use of organ points. Below is a full score of the piece from the very end of chapter six, when Morina feels that she has done something wrong when she let Eli in on the secret of noise. Guilt fuels her own noise, which in turn makes her see the twin moons, even in the light of day.

Walking down Dock Street, she replayed the recent scene with Eli in her head.

He is the future, his art meant to prepare the people around him for the day when art becomes unnecessary, a lesson on the road to become one with matter, she thought, smiling as the future suddenly seemed a little brighter before her.

Coming out of her contemplation, she noticed that something was different about the people circulating Dock Street today. She had walked this road plenty of times in the shadows of night, but now in the light of day, the street seemed darker than ever. Strangers followed her every move as the passing faces of random pedestrians gave her one judgmental look after the other. They are punishing me, Morina realized sadly. They know that I tampered with something perfect. She kept her head down as she walked, not wanting to meet the gazes of any by passers, when she suddenly began to shiver as the world turned frigid under a dying sun. When she looked up, she could swear that she saw the outline of something large and spherical next to the vague, but very real day moon, almost like another sun were emerging from another world.

World of twin moons full score:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0Byr5aqOZoIYddjVocUhmRGJ2cWM>

6. 1.5. In a Blackleaf haze.

In chapter eight, Eli and Morina are chatting over a joint of Blackleaf in Eli's beautiful garden (described as "the sea of green" in the book). The introduction is as follows: "The coming of September saw the sea of grass regress from a healthy deep green to a dying yellow, along with the unclenching of the majestic trees, stripped bare of their warm coats as the leaves left them thin, haggard and freezing in the cooling air. Colors of all sorts sprouted from everywhere as the fauna reached the pinnacle of its beauty during the last withering stages of life, a closing ceremony to what had come and was now soon to pass, a ceremony unwittingly celebrated by an island of two."

For a while, the two friends philosophize around the term "noise", but they are suddenly interrupted by a storm. Instead of going inside for shelter, Morina gets the idea that they should go to the beach, which in turn leads to chapter nine, and the piece "In a Blackleaf haze". The chapter can be seen at the next page.

Chapter 9

A rainy day in a blackleaf haze - musical piece.



Chapter nine contains no more words than the description of the piece itself, and thus the listener is supposed to imagine what the two friends do on that rainy day, bringing the consumer into the creation of the world. Important to note is that the plot will disregard what the consumer chooses to happen in this particular chapter. The chapter is there for the consumer to feel more connected to the world.

The piece composed to chapter nine is based around a certain mood, meant to coerce the consumer's imagination. To do this, I built the piece around two chords: Cmadd9b5 and Fm6, played by a vibraphone as an accompaniment to the clarinets soothing Cm melody. Together they create a sort of "barren sadness timbre" that is so prevalent in the music throughout this book. A full score can be found below.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0Byr5aqOZoIYdWUUwNndObU8wekE>

6. 1.6. Pointless ponderings

In chapter eleven, Eli describes an experience at a party where he saw a group of people being alone together, rather than the happy bunch he had seen before (the people had of course stayed the same all along; it was he who had changed).

Below follows an excerpt from page 57 of the fragmented part of the book that's attached to this thesis. This is where Eli explains to Morina what happened at the party.

I met the faces of the people around me, and saw not the coherent unit I had seen only moments earlier. Rather, I saw a gathering of people being alone together, fooling themselves to believe in something dead, people seeing only through their eyes and therefore seeing nothing at all. The noise around them, designed to drown out their own in order to make them complacent and gullible, turning them into a multitude of regressive beacons.

Morina believes that the noise is causing him to over-analyze the world and distance himself from it. The piece "Pointless ponderings" is a description of how the noise can make people over-analyze things, trapping them in a circle of thoughts that they are unable to escape themselves.

To represent this musically, I chose a sparse melodic material that is repeated in different forms and variations to create the illusion that the material is played over and over. This melodic material is then paired with a minimalistic harmonic background played by the piano. Examples follow below.

In the example below, we can see the theme stretch from bar five to bar nine

Movement three - Pointless Ponderings

Ola Moun

♩ = 58
Pondering

Flute
Clarinet in B
Percussion
Piano
Violin
Viola
Violoncello

2 3 4 5

Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.

6 7 8 9 10

A fermata stops the music, a break in the stream of unnecessary thoughts. Maybe here the thoughts will end? But no, they return shortly later with a piercing high violin note from niente to mezzopiano. A piercing note for a piercing thought. All of this is shown in the image below.

Musical score for measures 11-15. The score includes staves for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Percussion (Perc.), Piano (Pno.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). Measures 11-15 show a piano accompaniment of eighth-note triplets in both hands. The violin part has a fermata in measure 11, followed by a sharp rise in dynamics from *mp* in measure 12 to a higher register in measure 13.

In bar 18, the theme begins anew in a higher octave.

Musical score for measures 16-20. The score includes staves for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Percussion (Perc.), Piano (Pno.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). Measures 16-20 show a piano accompaniment of eighth-note triplets in both hands. The violin part has a fermata in measure 18, followed by a sharp rise in dynamics from *mp* in measure 19 to a higher register in measure 20.

Eventually, the music progresses to include the other instruments of the ensemble (Fl, Cl, Perc, and Vla), the addition of the instruments along with a crescendo create a ramp that leads into silence. The music then regresses back to the theme; back to the thought that would never go away. The piece ends in the original form of Eli's theme to illustrate whom the noise belongs to. All of this is shown in the example below.

The musical score shows the following details:

- Measures 40-41:** Tempo of quarter note = 150. Dynamics are *f*. Instruments include Fl., Cl., Vib., Pno., Vln., Vla., and Vc. with triplets and accents.
- Measures 42-43:** Tempo of quarter note = 55. Dynamics are *mp*. Instruments include Fl., Cl., Vib., Pno., Vln., Vla., and Vc. with sustained notes and triplets.
- Measure 44:** Tempo is *rit.* Dynamics are *pp*. Instruments include Fl., Cl., Vib., Pno., Vln., Vla., and Vc. with sustained notes.

6. 1.7. Unbridled Noise.

In chapter 12+1 the noise is unleashed in full for the first time. Up until now, it has stayed rather dormant in some pianissimo state, but now the orchestra expresses it through a full fortissimo. This is meant to signify that the noise has taken over the characters, that they are past the point of no return.

Musically this is shown by the theme of twin moons, which is also the theme of the noise, being played first in the Contrabassoon, then in the woodwinds, then in the full orchestra. The harmonies are created out of the polyphony. By that I mean that the sum of the melodic pitches in a measure becomes the harmony. The arrangement is sparse at first before the full tutti breaks out and the theme is

allowed its cacophonous end that it always strived for. A full score can be found below.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0Byr5aqOZoIYdSGRWTld3Zk9mVmc>

Unbridled Noise

6. 1.8. Eli's last piece.

Towards the end of the book, Morina and Eli find themselves in a church. In a moment of mischievousness, Morina convinces Eli to play his last composition on the massive organ located at the church. After a little coercion, he gives in and plays a piece so filled with noise that Morina leaves the church before he's finished, the guilt being too much for her to handle.

Below follows a quote from the excerpt where Morina has just heard Eli's noise filled composition.

"Morina couldn't stand to stay until the end of the piece. Instead she slipped out underneath the volumes of timbre that radiated from the monstrous instrument, a quiet second part of the piece beginning just as she shut herself outside"

This late in the story, the noise has become musically obvious, as it had in the piece "Unbridled Noise." To illustrate this absolute noise musically, I wanted to create something very alien, large and loud. To do this I made a timbre based piece with clear roots in a sequence of intervals. To find the top notes of the chords, I began with the interval minor seventh, and then I found the next note by inverting the interval in the opposite direction (the inverse being a major second). And thus I created the "melody of the chords." Below is an example of how I set up the intervals to make the melody (permutations may occur.)

The image shows two staves of musical notation in treble clef. The first staff contains eight measures with notes and interval labels above them: 7, 2, 6, 3, 5, 3, Tr, 4. The second staff contains eight measures with notes and interval labels above them: 3, 7, 2, 6, 3, 5, tr, 4. The notes are mostly whole notes with sharp signs, and the intervals are indicated by numbers and 'Tr' or 'tr'.

From the melody I constructed the chords based on my intuition, guided by my images of how the organ would sound in that very scene.

7. Answering research questions

- How is the creative process affected when I combine the two major art disciplines of composition and the written word within the same artistic work?
- How do the individual results within the two major art disciplines compare with some of my previous projects where only one major discipline was used?

The music in this project was created alongside the book. This means that I sometimes alternated between the disciplines on a daily cycle, but sometimes I worked with both disciplines on the same day. In the beginning, working within this kind of creative process was hard on the mind. Often, the two disciplines would create a chaos of thoughts, making it hard to focus on the tasks at hand. But as the time passed, the disciplines merged slowly but surely to form some sort of mood, making the process go both smoother and with less pain. This “mood” that I found is the one I have been referring to as the “barren sadness timbre”. In short; the further into the process I got, the faster I was able to work, since the world grew clearer and clearer in my mind.

In the end though, I believe that the heartaches in the beginning were worth it, as I would never have been able to enter that imaginary world in the same way as I did. For is art supposed to be without pain? And is not great art created through pain? I think something beautiful, almost pristine was born from the early toils in this process, something that I would never have found had I not searched for it. For me, that something was the barren sadness timbre, a mood and style I had not encountered before in my compositions, and its result became *The Noise*, the first work of art within the genre of symphonic-fiction novels. This barren timbre sound is of course not something completely new, as its struggle towards a certain mood makes the music created within it closely resemble that of film music.

Stylistically, the music in this project differs a lot from my usual compositional style, as it tends to be more rhythmical and aggressive. Rarely has my music been centered on timbre as so many of the pieces are in this project.

As a reference, I will add a recording along with the score to a piece I composed in 2014 called “Continuum,” a piece that well represents my usual compositional style

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0Byr5aqOZoIYdMFVxNUV6eFFWYkE>

Continuum

Yet I could argue that the aggressiveness in my traditional style has only changed form into something less obvious. For when I compose music within the barren sadness timbre mood, it still feels like I have the same frustrations, the same longings and ideals of perfectness as I had when I composed in my traditional style. Yet, the music that I create is still different, since the world I am writing the music *for*, gives me a new focus and inspiration. It’s almost as if the aggressiveness has turned seething rather than open rage it used to be.

Similarities can also be found, especially if one were to look at my previous orchestral music. Even though I didn’t feel comfortable within the genre of timbre based music, I’ve still made some experiments within that particular style. Below is a recording and a score for the piece “Inertia,” that I composed in 2015. It shares some of the orchestration with the orchestral pieces in this project, that is to say that I utilize the low and middle registers of the orchestra.

Link to the score:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0Byr5aqOZoIYdOXdRUTdyczM3S1E>

Inertia

Link to the music:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0Byr5aqOZoIYdWVpITXZNcUR4bTg>

Another similarity can be found if I compare the overture with a piece I composed in 2012 called “New Dawn.” These pieces are very similar in both mood and orchestration, yet the overture is also somewhat of an anomaly to the rest of the music in this project, as I’ve previously mentioned.

Score:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0Byr5aqOZoIYdWDVDy1yOWx4VEU>

Music:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0Byr5aqOZoIYdREtuc29MbW5nRzA>

8. Discussion

8.1. Similar projects

While searching the web for any similar looking projects, I found a web page named “booktrack.com”. Here authors are offered access to an extensive sound library and a software platform that the authors can then use to synchronize music with their books. The quote below is taken from this homepage:

Booktrack Studio is a free-to-use sound production platform that provides the ability for authors to create a synchronized-to-text soundtrack experience.

Authors and publishers can easily create their own Booktrack by choreographing their stories to Booktrack’s extensive library of over 20,000 free-to-use music and ambient audio tracks. The Booktrack library is rapidly expanding with our users who have already created more than 12,000 short stories and novels in 30 different languages. Booktrack has nearly 2.5 million readers in 150 different countries looking for stories like yours.

Booktrack synchronizes movie-style soundtracks to eBooks. Music, ambient audio, and sound effects are automatically paced to an individual's reading speed and synchronized to complement and enhance the story while a person reads.

On booktrack.com, some of the classic works within literature have been prepared as advertisement for their project, one of them was “Bram Stoker’s - Dracula’s Guest”. Curious, I gave it a read. The first thing that hit me was how stressed I became when the music began. The sense of stress was soon accompanied by frustration as I had to split my attention between the music and the text. After reading the first page thrice, I still wasn’t completely sure of its contents. Then I discovered that they had a function that let me personalize my “words per minute count,” so I tried to lower this as much as possible, but in the end it had the same result. As I read on, I found myself increasingly frustrated that I didn’t manage to give the two mediums the attention they deserved.

Why was this not a medium that worked for me? I asked myself. I like movies, I like ambient music/film music and I like the idea of combining these. Theoretically I should be the perfect consumer for Booktrack's products.

Yet, when I read, I like to read a page many times, I like to taste the words in my mouth and feel the rhythm of the sentence. To do this, I need to enjoy the book with my own speed in my own time and with my mind focused on the writing, rather than divided with what I could only perceive as annoying noise, interrupting my attempts to read. This experience deprived me of all of those things.

It is worth mentioning that I too had an idea that was similar to Booktrack's product, but I discarded it after I tried to read a book along with the soundtrack to "The Lord of the Rings," and arrived at exactly the same conclusions as I did above. At the time, I asked myself these questions, which still seem to have some relevance for Booktrack's project.

- 1) Why not have the readers play any generic soundtrack in the background while they read? Would it not achieve the same goal?
- 2) The music cannot be overly important if the reader is supposed to focus on the text. The music will therefore never be able to transcend its trivial role as accompaniment, meaning that the text can never be equally important as the music.
- 3) If the music were to rise above a piano in volume, I think most of us would interpret it as noise when we're reading. How can the music survive on its own without a change in the dynamics? Eventually it must grow monotonous.

As I see it, imagining literature as a movie is the wrong way to go forward. Literature demands more of the consumer than the movie as the act of reading is for many of us a more demanding task than the act of watching a plot unfold by itself. In the movies, the music can take a bigger role during the pauses of the plot, for example during scenes of landscapes and so forth, but when we read, we need our minds to be continuously present in the text for us to understand when the scene moves forward.

It is important to note that I am of course biased in this assessment, and these opinions should just be seen for what they are: one man's opinion. For many people I think what Booktrack.com is doing is the perfect medium, but for

me, and I believe many others, I think that the synchronization between the music and the text is nothing but counterproductive.

On a webpage named “Livescience.” From 2014, I also found an article named “TransProse’ Software Creates Musical Soundtracks from Books.” The article describes a project that tries to generate piano pieces based anticipated emotions in the reader. In their own words:

’Given a novel in an electronically readable form, our system – called TransProse – generates simple piano pieces whose notes are dependent on the emotion words in the text,’ said Saif Mohammad, a computer scientist at the National Research Council Canada.

Together with Hannah Davis, who created TransProse as her master's thesis at New York University, Mohammad used the software to count the density of words associated with eight basic emotions: anticipation, anger, joy, fear, disgust, sadness, surprise and trust.

Although there have been previous studies that analyzed sentiments or examined the creation of music, TransProse is the first to combine the two, the researchers said. "It is the first system that automatically generates musical pieces based on the emotions in the text, and uses a novel mechanism to determine sequences of notes that capture the emotional activity in text," Mohammad said.

While their experiment seems very exciting, I think I would run into the same problem here as I did with the Booktrack project. To me, both of these projects seem to focus on the connection of timing and synchronization. I would like to add that there are so many other possibilities to connect the written word with music than through synchronization. To name a few: Themes based on the characters, music that has its own original sound in accordance with the book and music that continues to tell a story where words fall short.

8.2. General discussion.

If we look at what the world has to offer today in regard to the combination of literature and music, I think we would find it quite lacking, at least if we are to use the same parameters as I have used in *The Noise*. I do not say this to belittle the work *Booktrack.com* and *TransProse* are doing, they are undoubtedly pioneers within this field and should be treated as such. I say this to underline the fact that we are still in the stone age when it comes to combining these two genres in this way, and that more artists and researchers must pick up the torch if the symphonic-fiction novel is to become a widespread form of art.

I ended the previous section by stating some of the ways in which I connected the two disciplines. In this part I will elaborate upon this. Based on my research in this thesis, I have reason to believe that our main problem within this genre is the notion that it somehow has to be synchronized in time with one another. I mentioned Themes, original sound and music that aim to continue the story as possible alternatives to this synchronization. These suggestions were not taken out of thin air, but were the very pillars upon which I used to connect the two disciplines in *The Noise*. Along with the escape from the norm of synchronization, I believe these pillars to be very essence of what this project brings as new information to the artistic community.

In this thesis, I've also touched upon the research question "Does it show in the final artwork that two major disciplines were used by the same person?" I think that an external listener will see no other connection between these disciplines rather than that the person who created the music seems to be intimately connected with the written word. This doesn't necessarily prove that it was made by the same person; in fact, it could have been created in a collaboration between two artists. I don't think any listener would believe this work to be any more intimately linked than the music to "The Lord of the Rings" movies. But for me, the person that lived within that same sphere for so long, the connection and result is clear. That sphere, and this project added a new dimension to my creative process, and a style of composing that was completely new to me.

It's safe to say that this enterprise has been the most rewarding one in my life so far. Not only did I achieve my goal of writing a full novel, I also managed to compose and record an hour's worth of music, a feat I was not completely sure was within my powers when I began. But here I am, at the end of the road, intellectually increased.

I hope that any artist, be it musician, composer or writer, who wants to continue down this path of combining music with the written word will be able to read this dissertation and learn from my mistakes. Hopefully, they will have a clear idea of how to bring the text and the music together already before the first note or word is written.

9. List of recordings

The recordings are listed in the order they were presented in this thesis. All music is composed by the author of this thesis, Ola Moum.

- 1) Overture, Umeå symphony orchestra, 2016
- 2) Eli's piece, performed by Ola Moum, 2016
- 3) Variations of "Uncertain Futures", Umeå symphony orchestra, 2016
- 4) The World Of Twin Moons, performed by Linnea Martinius and Per Brudsten, 2016
- 5) In a blackleaf haze, performed by Mikael Roos and Emma Roos Lindberg
- 6) Pointless ponderings, performed by Norrbotten NEO, 2015
- 7) Unbridled Noise, performed by Umeå symphony orchestra, 2016
- 8) Eli's Last Piece, performed by Per Brudsten, 2016
- 9) Inertia, performed by Umeå symphony orchestra, 2015
- 10) New Dawn, performed by Umeå symphony orchestra, 2014

10. References

- Booktracks' homepage, 06.05.2016
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- <https://promo.booktrack.com/self-publish> Booktracks' explanation of their project.
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- <http://www.livescience.com/45500-literature-emotions-music.html> TransProse project.
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- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Booktrack> Wikipedia on the Booktrack project,
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11. Appendix

- An excerpt from the discussed chapters of the book with the audio imbedded in the PDF will be attached to this thesis.